

WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM

What's the Dirt?

Information for home-owners about preventing "dirt pollution"

If dirt is natural, how can it be bad for our water? You may be surprised to find that the County receives more complaint calls about dirt than any other pollutant. But what makes dirt a pollutant?

When it leaves your property, dirt is washed into storm drains where it begins its journey through the watershed. Anything that enters a storm drain eventually ends up in our streams and ocean – unfiltered and untreated. Along the way, dirt fills in streams, and blocks sunlight that plants need to live. Dirt also disrupts the ways that fish and other animals breathe, reproduce and grow. Dirt also carries other pollutants with it.

Keeping San Diego's water clean and healthy for plants, animals, and people is the right thing to do. *It's also the law.* The County of San Diego Watershed Protection Ordinance prohibits the discharge of dirt and other pollutants to the storm drain system. The ordinance also establishes minimum best management practices (or BMPs). BMPs are things you can do to prevent pollution. You are responsible for making sure that dirt and other pollutants do not leave your property and enter the storm drain system. You can also be held responsible for the actions of your landscaper and other contractors. Please turn this card over for a list of helpful BMPs.

Remember, we all live downstream!



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO



Best Management Practices (BMPs) *for erosion control and preventing "dirt pollution"*

Use some of the tips below to keep dirt on your property.

For more detailed BMPs, visit

www.cabmphandbooks.com/Construction.asp

Contain Your Dirt

Do what's needed to keep dirt contained. Cover piles of dirt with tarps, or build berms around them.

Terrace Slopes

Terracing slopes can help keep dirt in your yard.

Plan Ahead

Plan your grading or terracing projects during the dry season (May-Sept.) if possible. Planning ahead will allow seeds to take hold and grow before the rain washes slopes away.

Let Plants Do the Work

Plant trees, shrubs, and grasses to hold dirt onto slopes. Mulching also helps hold water in the soil and keeps topsoil in place. Use drought-tolerant, native plants to reduce water use.

Keep an Eye on Things

Make a habit of checking back every now and then to see if **your BMPs are still working – make repairs as needed.** Call with questions, or report stormwater violations at **(888) 846-0800.**

To review a complete copy of the Watershed Protection Ordinance, visit our website at www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dpw/watersheds



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